

Message Text

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17

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-02 INR-07

INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-03 USIA-06

SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 FRB-03 FEA-01

PA-01 PRS-01 /101 W

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R 190827Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0901

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 1797

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

PARIS FOR OECD

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, SF, ECRP

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER EASES GASOLINE CONSERVATION MEASURES

REFERENCE: (A) PRETORIA A-49

(B) PRETORIA 1084

(C) CERP 4250

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IN RADIO ADDRESS MAY 16 PM VORSTER
ANNOUNCED THAT SPEED LIMIT IMPOSED AS FUEL CONSERVATION
MEASURE WOULD BE INCREASED FROM 80 TO 90 KPH. ALSO ANNOUNCED
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SERVICE STATIONS COULD OPEN FROM 7 A.M. TO 6 P.M. MONDAYS THROUGH

FRIDAYS, 8 A.M. TO 1 P.M. SATURDAYS. (PREVIOUS HOURS WERE 6 TO 6 MONDAYS THROUGH FRIDAYS ONLY.)

2. PM SAID COMPLIANCE WITH SPEEDLIMITS, COMMENDABLE AT FIRST, HAD LESSENNED RECENTLY. NEW LIMIT WOULD BE ENFORCED BY STRONGER MEASURES. ENFORCEMENT OF LOWER LIMITS IN CERTAIN AREAS, NOT IMPOSED AS CONSERVATION MEASURES, WOULD REVERT TO PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

3. VORSTER SAID CRUDE OIL NOW EASILY AVAILABLE ON WORLD MARKET FOR COUNTRIES ABLE TO PAY BUT CONSERVATION MEASURE NEEDED TO SAVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE. CLAIMED COUNTRY HAD SPENT 700 MILLION RAND MORE FOR OIL IN 1974 THAN IN 1973. (1973 FIGURES ARE KEPT SECRET BUT 1972 TRADE STATISTICS SHOW IMPORTS INTO THE REPUBLIC, SOUTH WEST AFRICA, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND OF R131 MILLION FOR CRUDE AND R58 MILLION FOR PRODUCTS.) END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. ALTHOUGH PM CALLED IT AN ESTIMATE, FIGURE OF R700 MILLION IS FIRST FROM AN OFFICIAL SOURCE ON 1974 OIL IMPORTS. IF FIGURE IS SOUND AND IF IMPORTS IN 1973 WERE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AS IN 1972, SA APPEARS TO HAVE SPENT ABOUT R850-900 MILLION FOR OIL AND PRODUCTS LAST YEAR. WE ARE, HOWEVER, INCLINED TO THINK R700 MILLION ADDITIONAL IN 1974 MAY BE EXAGGERATED. PM HAD REASON TO QUOTE A HIGH FIGURE TO DRAMATIZE SITUATION AND R900 MILLION WOULD BUY MORE OIL THAN COUNTRY IMPORTED IN 1972. (AT \$10 A BARRELL R900 MILLION WOULD BUY ABOUT 370,000 BPD; 1972 IMPORTS WERE 17.3 MILLION KILOLITERS, I.E. 298,000 BPD, FOR THE CUSTOMS AREA.)

5. IF 1974 IMPORTS WERE 300,000 BPD AVERAGE PRICE PAID WOULD BE JUST OVER \$12. WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S ESTIMATE OF LIKELY AVERAGE PRICE PAID BY SOUTH AFRICA IN 1974.
BOWDLER

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